

SIGN: A Call for UUP Leadership to Stand against Genocide

22 December 2023

As members of the United University Professions (UUP), the nation's largest higher education union, we commend the recently released SEIU rank-and-file call for their union leaders to JOIN THE GROWING CALL ACROSS THE WORLD TO STAND WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. We, as UUP members, also call on our UUP leadership to do the same, with the same demands. We have adapted this powerful [SEIU statement](#) as a template that our UUP members can endorse, sending a clear message to our UUP leaders to take action to stand on the right side of history.

The signed members of UUP renounce Israel's genocide against Palestinians and ask our leadership to:

1. Join the growing call from unions across the world to **stop the genocide** of Palestinians.
2. Call for an **end to the siege** on Gaza and the provision of humanitarian aid to Gazans.
3. Pressure President Biden to **end military assistance** to Israel.
4. Publicly declare support for the **BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement**.
5. Commit to **not retaliating against members** who support Palestinian liberation.

We join the growing list of our union siblings around the world calling for the immediate end of the genocide against the Palestinian people. The following is a list of some of the many statements released by US unions up to this point:

- [American Postal Workers Union](#)
- [1199 SEIU](#)
- [National Nurses United](#)
- [National Writers Union](#)
- [California Nurses Association](#)
- [Starbucks Workers United](#)
- [Thurston-Lewis-Mason Central Labor Council \(AFL-CIO\)](#)
- [SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania](#)
- [Rutgers AAUP-AFT](#)
- [Rutgers Adjunct Faculty Union](#)
- [Minneapolis Federation of Teachers](#)
- [Oakland Education Association](#)
- [Graduate Employees' Union, AFT 3550 \(University of Michigan\)](#)
- [Graduate Student Organizing Committee, UAW 2110 \(New York University\)](#)
- [Student Workers of Columbia, UAW 2710 \(Columbia University\)](#)
- [Harvard Graduate Students Union, UAW Local 5118](#)
- [ILWU Local 10](#)



- [SEIU Local 509](#)
- [SEIU Local 668](#)
- [Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals, AFT Local 5017](#)
- [UE Local 150 \(University of North Carolina Chapel Hill\)](#)
- [UFCW Local 663](#)
- [DC Caucus of Rank and File Educators](#)
- [UAW Staff United](#)
- [National Education Association president Becky Pringle](#)

Additionally, scores of US unions and labor bodies have signed onto [this US labor movement petition](#) calling for a ceasefire in Gaza:

- United Auto Workers (UAW) International
- United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America (UE)
- UFCW Local 3000
- Chicago Teachers Union
- Boston Teachers Union
- AFT-Oregon
- Oregon Education Association
- Seattle Education Association
- St. Paul Federation of Educators
- Massachusetts Teachers Association
- Faculty Staff Union, University of Massachusetts Boston
- Malden Education Association
- San Antonio Alliance of Teachers & Support Personnel, NEA/AFT Local 67
- Coalition of Labor Union Women
- SEIU Local 500
- IBEW Local 520
- IBEW 553
- IBEW 58
- Communications Workers of America Local 7250
- IUPAT District Council 35
- NJ State Industrial Union Council
- Western Massachusetts Area Federation of Labor (AFL-CIO)
- Austin Central Labor Council
- San Antonio AFL-CIO Central Labor Council
- UAW Region 6
- UAW Region 9
- UAW Local 2865 (University of California)
- UAW Local 6950 (University of Connecticut)
- UNITE HERE Local 8
- USW Local 9544
- Pacifica Media Workers Guild, CWA Local 39521
- SEIU-United Service Workers West
- United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers and Allied Workers Local 36
- Industrial Workers of the World, NYC General Membership Branch
- Industrial Workers of the World Mid-Valley Branch
- And [many more](#)



To: United University Professions President Fred Kowal and UUP Leaders

We, the members of United University Professions (NYSUT Local 2190), understand the power of collective worker action to confront and dismantle oppression and the pivotal and historic role of the labor movement in resisting imperialism. As the largest higher education union, we must join the growing call across the world to stand with the Palestinian people. The signed members of UUP renounce Israel's genocide against Palestinians and ask our leadership to commit to protecting workers from retaliation for expressing their solidarity with Palestinian liberation; supporting the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement; and pressuring President Biden to end U.S. military funding to Israel.

Since October 7th, [Israel has dropped the equivalent of two nuclear bombs](#) onto the Gaza Strip, where 2.5 million people, including one million children, live in a 25-mile open-air prison. Israel is starving Gaza, restricting vital fuel, water, and food, and bombing schools, mosques, hospitals, homes, and refugee camps. [Israel has killed](#) more than 20,057 Palestinians in Gaza, including over 8,000 children. In the West Bank, the Israeli military and settlers have killed hundreds of Palestinians and continue to forcibly displace them. These numbers only increase as Israel's aggression, backed by the United States, escalates.

But the genocide of Palestinians did not begin in October of 2023. Since 1948, Israel has forcibly removed millions of Palestinians from their homes and land, subjected the Palestinian people to a system of apartheid, and bombarded Palestinians with numerous military attacks. Today, it's estimated that Israel imprisons over 10,000 Palestinians, including children.

The U.S. has long supported Israel as a way to advance its own strategic interests in the region. Now, while millions across the world call for an end to this brutality, our elected officials continue to actively enable the onslaught through political backing, military support, and billions the U.S. provides to Israel annually through our tax dollars.

Palestinians deserve to live free from violence, displacement, and oppression. The labor movement has a long history of solidarity with the struggle for liberation globally. From apartheid South Africa to the U.S. civil rights movement, union members have marched, joined boycotts, lobbied politicians, and raised our collective voices to dismantle oppressive systems. We refused our labor where it would further an amoral goal. This moment, too, calls for bold, unwavering action. If we remain silent, then we are complicit in genocide.

Our call for solidarity with Palestinian liberation is an extension of our commitment to racial justice work. Just as we include land acknowledgments at the beginning of union gatherings, which recognize the genocide and dispossession of indigenous peoples from the U.S. lands we now occupy, we have a duty to call out the active genocide of Indigenous Palestinians happening in real time. We must oppose the violent rhetoric of Israeli and U.S. leaders, which breeds Islamophobia and racism at home towards members and staff. If we continue to amplify the rhetoric framing this genocide as a "conflict," then we are only enabling white supremacist, Islamophobic violence — a betrayal of our values and our proclaimed goal of becoming an anti-racist organization. We remember and honor the lives of Wadea Al-Fayoume and Dr. Talat Jehan Khan, who were recently killed amidst the



current surge of racist and Islamophobic violence in the U.S., which CAIR reports has increased by 216% in October alone. We also hold in our hearts the other BAMEMSA (Black, Arab, Middle Eastern, and South Asian) people who have been beaten, had hijabs or turbans snatched, and been rammed by cars, tear-gassed, threatened, stabbed, and tracked down to be “hunted” in the recent onslaught of racist and Islamophobic rhetoric. We ask UUP leadership to not only think about this topic critically as individuals, but also to consider how the words shared with members and the public manufacture consent for racist violence at home, and genocide and land theft in Palestine.

UUP leadership are elected to represent members’ voices in politics, and must publicly stand with us against the genocide of Palestinians. UUP must continue to stand strong in our commitment to being at the forefront of anti-racism. Therefore, we call on UUP leadership to act towards:

1. Stopping the genocide of Palestinians: Join the growing calls from unions and workers across the globe in a public statement demanding that Israel immediately end its armed offensive against the Palestinian people.
2. Ending the siege on Gaza: We echo the call made by our siblings in the labor movement for water, fuel, food, and other humanitarian aid to be allowed into Gaza, and electricity to be restored.
3. Refusing to further arm Israel: Pressure Biden, AFL-CIO and AFT’s endorsed presidential candidate, to end military funding & assistance to Israel and pressure Israel to end its genocide in Gaza.
4. Publicly declaring support for the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement initiated by Palestinian trade unions.
5. Not retaliating against members for supporting Palestinian liberation: Protect all workers from retaliation for expressing and acting on their commitment, aligned with UUP values, to lead the way to a more just and equitable world by calling for an end to another colonial occupation and apartheid system.

Signed,

UUP Members

[See this link for full list of signatories.](#)

mletwin@gmail.com [Switch account](#)



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